The Inquirer

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THE UNITARIAN FUTURE

THE first article of faith in any religious conviction is that the belief around which the conviction is held lasts for ever. When in the year 410 A.D. the ancient world seemed to have come to a disastrous end with the fall of Rome to the barbarians, and the whole of civilisation appeared to be in wrack and ruin with God deserting it, a great man, St. Augustine, proclaimed that there was an eternal City of God, to be perceived by men's minds, and to be lived for. St. Augustine was right, and the realistic pessimists were wrong. The City of God stands served by idealism.

For Ever

A more grim story, emphasising the same article of faith is told by William James, the American philosopher, in a famous essay, "Is Life Worth Living?" in his book "The Will to Believe".

He wrote of the Waldenese, a Protestant sect, who still exist in their Alpine valleys

In the year 1485 they were doomed to destruction by a Papal Bull which demanded their extermination, with great rewards to those who would undertake it. They still existed, 145 years later, having endured a terrible persecution. Then, in the year 1630, a plague swept away one half of them, including fifteen of their seventeen pastors. William James relates what followed:

"The places of these were supplied from Geneva and Dauphiny, and the whole Vaudois people learned French in order to follow their services. More than once their number fell, by unremitting persecution, from the normal standard of twenty-five thousand to about four thousand. In 1686 the Duke of Savoy ordered the three thousand that remained to give up their faith or leave the country. Refusing they fought the French Piedmontese armies till only eighty of their fighting men remained alive or unexpatriated, when they gave up the struggle and were sent in a body to Switzerland. But in 1689, encouraged by William of Orange and led by one of their native captains, between eight hundred and nine hundred of them returned to conquer their old homes again. They fought their way to Bobi, reduced to four hundred men in the first half year, and met every force sent against them; until at last the Duke of Savoy, giving up his alliance with the abominations of desolation, Louis XIV, restored them to comparative freedom—since which time they have increased and multiplied in their barren Alpine villages to this day."

The New Year

It is a far cry from these illustrations to what is happening to organised religion today, yet there can be little doubt that where religion is valiant and convincing the same conditions prevail.

It is a theme with which to face the New Year.

Since the end of the war the Unitarian ministry in this country has been reduced by a half and the numbers are still diminishing. This is taking place in a social situation which is taking its toll of organised religion. Inflation and new social habits have bitten into an accepted religious mode. What is to be done?

Prudence will do everything that can be done with material and administrative means. It seems sometimes to be thought that religious institutions need not bother themselves with such matters. In fact it is occasionally hinted that there is a lack of faith in doing so. But there is not the slightest reason to suppose—for instance—that where a ministry is thought to be necessary the men and women should exist on a lower relative standard of living than before the war except for unwillingness or inability to provide for it.

The Deeper Core

But when everything has been done that can be done with material means there is still left the deeper core of a religious movement—the conviction, that what it believes in lasts for ever; and just because it lasts for ever demands articulation and service here and now.

When the Unitarian movement in the company of other religious bodies is receiving hard blows from passing events, the great challenge is to be found in the meaning of its convictions, and the power which can be felt coming from them.

This is a challenge to the Unitarian community and particularly to the ministry. It is in a great measure ignored. The old, old patterns of action are repeated, but the specific spiritual challenge as distinct from the administrative is not seen or is virtually forgotten. The article of faith which declares that what is believed in must last for ever is hardly looked at; there is only a hesitant acknowledgment of its existence.

It need not be. A revival of conviction and a major support for it could come from new unpretentious efforts that conviction could suggest. Now is the time of beginning in the Unitarian movement; that time is present and no matter what happens is always likely to be so.

The Future

To be specific. The real hard ministerial core of the Unitarian movement upon which the future can be created is to be found in the small but splendid group of men now in their forties, or near forties, who have a quarter of a century or more of creative effort before them. Are they certain that everything is being done that awaits doing in terms of conviction for the whole movement? Individual

men of course are preoccupied by the immediate tasks and callings of their churches. It can be said that this is more than enough. But is it? Is there no spiritual strength and adventure to be found in new forms of communion and activity among them which eventually can be given to the whole movement?

A passionate spiritual lead is asked for and sought. These are the times of new beginnings. Could not those to whom the future now very closely belongs communicate with one another, and out of their counsels, which could indeed be modest-enough, begin to feel the power and the passion of the "for ever". There is no reason at all why the old patterns should be repeated, there are new ones awaiting creative activity. They need not in any degree supersede the old ones; they could indeed give new strength and flame to them.

The material means are surely there for such new communion. Someone should take the lead.

GANDHI AND JESUS

By Thomas Hyslop

MANY would agree that Mahatma Gandhi, born in 1869 at Porbandar, Kathiawar, and martyred on Friday, 30th January, 1948, at Birla House in New Delhi, saint, pacifist, vegetarian, teetotaler, socialist, father of free India, was among the greatest figures of our time. A few days after his passing Mirabehn, one of his most ardent disciples, daughter of a British admiral whose original name was Miss Madeleine Slade, author of a recently published autobiography, maintained, using a fashion of speaking familiar on that subcontinent but eccentric over here, that once again had the blood of an avatar, an incarnation of the divine spirit, flowed for the Salvation of men. She expressed the belief that, although the body was no more, the soul of the Mahatma, now completely at one with the godhead, continues to exist, to inspire and to guide.

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A Hindu by religion, Gandhi meant by the term, God, the mysterious ineffable cause of manifestation which, although it cannot be logically demonstrated, is intuitively felt. The soul of man is, he proclaimed, consubstantial with God, and the purpose of human existence, so he said, is fully to realise the identity. He thought that, until this purpose is achieved, the soul is reborn again and again, each embodiment, whether noble or base, depending on the quality of deeds performed in the previous life. Note that although the doctrine of rebirth seems incredible to the overwhelming majority of us westerners, two well-known English divines were not unfavourable to it. Dean Inge averred that it might have a future and Dr. W. F. Cobb, for years Rector of St. Ethelburga's in the City of London, adopted it.

The Mahatma, extremely tolerant by nature and upbringing, would not have minded what your own metaphysical theories are. He was for absolute freedom of religious belief and practice. His one dogma, if dogma it can be called, was that we should love one another, love being the virtue extolled by the seers of the human race. The only way for us, living in an age of such terrifying, lethal weapons to avoid war and destruction is, he proclaimed, the cultivation of cordial human relationships.

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Such love being incompatible with power politics, excessive industrialism and ever-growing mass production, he advocated a federation of village republics. Every rural community, governed by a council of five persons annually elected, should produce, so far as possible, its own food, clothes, shelter, water, milk, sanitary arrangements, leisure activities and primary education.

There has recently been put out by the Navajivan Publishing House of Ahmedabad, a firm which produces books by and on Gandhi, a pamphlet with the title, "What Jesus means to Me". Compiled by R. K. Prabhu, it chiefly consists of statements about Jesus made by Gandhi in his writings. At the end you have the Sermon on the Mount and two of the Mahatma's favourite hymns, the one by Isaac Watts, the other by Augustus Toplady, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" and "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me".

For Gandhi, as can be learned on studying this booklet, Christianity is not a huge complicated organisation with cultus, ministry, hard and fast rules, hard and fast doctrines. It is neither more nor less than the Sermon on the Mount. He tells us truly enough that, even if it could be proved that Jesus never existed, the precepts of that fine discourse would still be valid. The Old Testament he found boring. The Pauline literature he felt to be much inferior to the discourse.

Acknowledging that Jesus was in fact a historical person, Gandhi denied that the Galilean was God's sole revelation. For the Mahatma Jesus was a notable embodiment of love, a prince among politicians, a prince among peace makers, an admirable advocate of voluntary poverty, the greatest economist of his time, he said, in short of the appearance on earth of the kingdom of God.

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While conceding that Jesus may have had psychic powers, Gandhi did not believe in the virgin birth, what he called the immaculate conception, and, although the story of the empty tomb is not mentioned, one imagines that he would have rejected the historicity of that too. He similarly doubted not only whether a multitude can be fed with a few scraps, but also whether one who is really dead can be raised. We learn that once, when a child, a relative, being unconscious, was thought to have passed away and might soon have been cremated, Gandhi furnished her with an enema and that, as a result, she was restored to consciousness.

He strongly criticised the activity of most missionaries, which he regarded as religious imperialism. He was of the opinion that, if Jesus, an Asiatic, were on this earth today, the latter would surely exhort Hindus not to denationalise themselves, to ape Europeans and adopt an alien, western cultus, but to be better Hindus. The Mahatma maintained that when western missionaries go to India, they should indulge in educational and Social Service. He would therefore doubtless have approved of the Kharang Rural Centre which, run by the Rev. Margaret Barr, an eminent Unitarian minister, in the Khasi Hills of Assam, was asked for by the Khasis themselves, not imposed upon them.

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Able to look at us Europeans objectively, he was appalled by the divergence between our religious profession and sorry practice. Although we claim to admire Jesus, we are responsible for nationalism and war, for imperialism and exploitation. The religion of the orthodox churches is, Gandhi felt, all too often a caricature of the ideal of the Galilean. But Gandhi acknowledged that thousands of Europeans do in fact rise above their environment.

Here are four typical quotations taken from this interesting pamphlet. "Jesus preached not a new religion but a new life." "Jesus lived and died in vain if he did not teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal Law of Love." "The love that Jesus taught and preached was not a mere personal virtue, but it was essentially a social and collective virtue." "Confront not Jesus' teaching with what passes as modern civilisation."

A LAYMAN'S DIARY

December 28. By the time these words appear in print, Christmas will be over. Readers of the *Inquirer* will not be particularly interested then (or, indeed, ever) to read about our household's Christmas preparations, which have been nothing out of the ordinary. (The only noteworthy event so far has been that David, having been entrusted with the job of producing some bread-crumbs for the Christmas dinner, has become a kind of Sorcerer's Apprentice armed with a whizzing machine, and in parts of the house we are having to wade almost knee-deep in the mortal remains of ancient crusty loaves.) So it has occurred to me that the end of the year might be an opportune

time for a few rather disjointed thoughts on our first year's experience of television in the home.

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I suppose there are still people who would look on it as a kind of confession of moral defeat to allow a TV set to enter their doors (and, of course, there is an even more limited *elite* who take the view I have heard expressed, that " television is for appearing on, not for looking at "). But this kind of inverted snobbery is practically dead (looking back, it seems to have died round about December 3, 1959, which, by a coincidence, was the day our set arrived), and it now appears to be generally accepted that the possession (or defiant non-possession) of a TV set is of little significance in the struggle to " keep up with the Joneses ", it is no longer necessary to explain, shamefacedly or brazenly, that one has (or has not) a set in the house. In short we have reached the healthy position that if Brown has a television set, it does not mean that he is either ostentatious in his tastes or Pilldown-browed in his intellectual outlook; and if Robinson *doesn't* have one, it simply means that he doesn't particularly want one, and it's a free country, isn't it ?

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When I started writing occasional notes on television programmes about a year ago, my main idea was to try to give a picture of BBC and ITV religious television. Before we had a set, we had found that it was mainly to see the *religious* broadcasts that we were " dropping in " on kind friends who had offered us general invitations to come and view on their sets; and I had already formed the view that one fairly widespread Unitarian attitude to religious broadcasting—that it is a bureaucratic plot to keep Unitarians off the air—was becoming a somewhat limited view to take. During the past year we have seen quite a number of the Sunday and weekday religious programmes (our Sunday service at church is a morning one, so I am often able to see one or other of the 7 p.m. *Meeting Point* [BBC] or *About Religion* [ITV] programmes), and I must say that I continue to be impressed by the range and imagination of a great many of them.

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On the whole, the BBC religious programmes seem to be based on a more coherent policy than those of ITV. It is true that the BBC prefers to present a " main-stream " picture when they are dealing with organised religious activities, but much of their work is undogmatic, in that it deals primarily with personal and social relationships, and through most of it there runs a consistently liberal thread. (For example, this year the traditional four Advent talks on sound radio are being given by Kenneth Barnes, a Quaker, and they have been far from " main-stream " in emphasis.) ITV may occasionally achieve a striking individual programme on religion (and I would commend *Sunday Break* as a genuine attempt to communicate with non-churchgoing younger people), but there is not much evidence of a coherent policy, and they go in more for straight presentation of ordinary conventional religious activities, making use of well-known dignitaries of the main denominations, especially those who are already " news " (such as Mervyn Stockwood, Donald Soper, George Macleod). Recently the *Observer* quoted a Roman Catholic archbishop as saying that ITV gave more attention to doctrinal matters; and I think that is a correct appraisal. For myself, as a Unitarian I prefer the BBC approach, which is to present religion far more mixed up in a social or personal setting; more mixed up with *life*, if you like. (To my mind the best kind of religious broadcast is one which you hardly spot as being " religious " at all, until you realise it was, from reading the captions moving across the screen at the end.)

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Turning from religious broadcasts to television generally, what have we learnt from our first year of viewing ? For the first few months, as a family, we had the usual " honeymoon " period, when the oblong screen dominated our sitting room, and we gaped at everything; it was all so new and fascinating. Then we began to feel that the thing was controlling our living habits too much, so we moved it (happy day !) into a less comfortable room and relaxed in the wonderful peace of the newly liberated sitting room, rediscovering the blessings of sound radio. (Until you have had TV, you cannot realise what a blessing sound radio is; may its shadow never grow less !) Nowadays we are all pretty selective in our viewing, and have become quite immune against the endless chain of 30-minute " mid-Atlantic " playlets which seem to aim at . . . well, I don't quite know who they do aim at, unless it be those people who have only had their sets for two or three months, or those who keep them on anyway, to warm the room.

A FINE OLD CHAPEL

THE UNITARIAN CHAPEL, TAUNTON

By the Minister, William Miller

THE worshippers in Mary Street Chapel, Taunton, are among the descendants of the two oldest Protestant dissenting congregations in the town, the General Baptist and the Presbyterian.

The members of the Baptist Society built, and were, for a number of years, the only worshippers in the Mary Street Chapel. Their first meeting house was erected, at a very early period, near the spot on which the present building stands. This early chapel was destroyed, and the present chapel was erected in 1721. It is, therefore the oldest nonconformist place of worship in Taunton. In an old chapel register there appear the following words: " Its good size and handsome appearance indicate that the congregation, by whose unaided exertions it was built was at that time numerous and wealthy." The General Baptist Society appears to have declined before the end of the 18th century.

Presbyterian

Now we turn our attention to the Presbyterian part of the congregation. The Presbyterian congregation originated in a secession from Paul's Meeting in 1732. A new meeting house was built, and this was described as " a neat building, 33 feet in front and 50 feet in depth, having an area before it planted with a row of lime trees."

This meeting house apparently fell into a ruinous state, and in 1815 it was taken down, the site converted into a burial ground, and the two congregations united on 24th June, 1815, under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Ludd Fenner and the Rev. Dr. Henry Davies.

In the meantime the former Baptist congregation had moved from their former Calvinistic position towards a more liberal point of view. The Presbyterians obviously adopted this liberal

Interior of Mary Street Chapel

theological position, which is not surprising, for about this time quite a number of Presbyterian congregations in England became Unitarian. The chapel was placed in trust for "the Worship of One God, the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Rich Architecture

In the year 1826-27 the members of the congregation subscribed £600 to repair and beautify their house of prayer and to install an organ. The chapel was re-opened on 22nd July, 1827. Mary Street Chapel is a genuine and lovely example of Puritan architecture. The interior has all the dignified charm and restraint of the finest of the dissenters' meeting houses of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, when permission was first given for the erection of such buildings for the worship of God.

The pulpit is probably contemporary, or possibly earlier, and is ornamented with some fine old oak carving. The large expanse of the roof is supported by two magnificant Corinthian columns of oak, richly carved about their capitals. All the pews and other contemporary woodwork are in Flemish oak darkened with age.

A very fine brass candelabrum hangs from the ceiling. This has been described as one of the best of its kind in England and was presented by Nathaniel Webb in 1728.

Valuable Plate

The furniture of the chapel includes a fine Tudor communion table and a valuable set of communion plate. This latter was presented by Mr. Samuel Noble and his mother, Mrs. Jane Noble, in 1745. It is believed that the communion plate had been in the family of the donors for quite some time before that date. There is, typically, a rose window behind the pulpit. From the old burying-ground on the south side the original brickwork of the exterior walls is visible.

Many distinguished preachers have occupied the pulpit of Mary Street during its long history, and on several occasions Coleridge walked from Nether Stowey to preach in it.

The Rev. Dr. Philip Wicksteed commenced his Ministry at Mary Street.

It will be seen from the foregoing notes that here is an historic chapel well worth a visit. The chapel can be seen and the items mentioned in these notes may be inspected by arrangement with the minister, who resides in the Manse adjoining the chapel.

Open to the public

Alas, time and tempest have had their effect upon the fabric. The ravages of wood-worm and death-watch beetle have necessitated a complete restoration of the chapel. This, together with redecoration and a new heating system, has brought about the launching of an appeal for £2,000.

Several gifts have been promised and a number have been received, including a handsome donation from the congregation of the First Parish Church, Taunton, Massachusetts.

THIRTY THOUSAND UNITARIANS BY 1962

PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REPORTS

IT is a little time since news of the Publicity Department appeared in these pages. Silence must not be interpreted as inactivity. Daily, by personal call, over the telephone and through the post, enquiries about our faith continue to come. A good deal of correspondence is involved—sometimes lengthy letters dealing with theological points. The number of enquirers was recently increased as a result of the broadcast in "Women's Hour" for which Mrs. Hankind of Golders Green was responsible.

The Department is developing a much closer relationship with the National Unitarian Fellowship. Mrs. K. Arciszewski of that lively organization has joined the Publicity Committee, and the Rev. Rosamund Barker has been appointed to the N.U.F. Committee, so that there shall be more efficient working together. Mrs. Arciszewski was one of the prime movers in the recent successful effort to establish a fellowship at Bedford. At Douglas, Isle of Man, there is another such project, and Principal Kenworthy is going to represent us at a public meeting. (In this kind of work the Department is the servant of the Fellowship Sub-Committee.)

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The Bolton group of Churches is preparing for the "follow-up" of their joint campaign, in which practical social service work on the part of each congregation is the focus of effort. Some six Churches in the Bury area are making plans for an Advance Campaign on a new pattern—where the strength and skill of the group is concentrated on each centre in turn. At Sheffield the District Association has had talks with our representative, the Rev. E. S. Price, and at a meeting in January it is hoped that Joint Campaign details may begin to take shape.

In some places the national advertising for which the Department is responsible is being backed by advertisements in the local press, planned and carried out by the local congregations. The Department helps with suggestions for suitable wording. A few Churches have co-operated in this way. Many more could and should. Local publicity should be a regular item on every Church budget.

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The year 1961 should be looked upon as a valuable time of preparation for the 1962 commemoration of the Great Ejection of 1662. A special poster carrying the title "The Story of the Unitarians" has been approved and will soon be on the printing press. In readiness for further Advance Campaigns in 1961 and 1962 a further supply of the stereos of the Flame symbol are being obtained, and they will be available for local use at prices from 4/6 to 9/- according to size. Church calendars and other material reaching headquarters show that this symbol of Unitarian Advance is being increasingly used.

Upon more than one occasion the Department has stressed the value of Church notice boards as a means of attracting the attention of the passer-by. At the moment the Wayside Pulpit posters for the next issue are being prepared. They will be the same size as previously, and a set of 26 costs thirty shillings. Where there is concern about the size of the board and the cost of it, the General Assembly is willing to make a grant towards the provision of one, so that increased use may be made of this effective means of winning interest in our cause.

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Travellers by ship would do well to enquire of the liner library for Phillip Hewett's book "An Undefeated Faith". The Cunard Steamship Co. Ltd., have recently purchased twenty copies, and other lines may also find that they have such a need. Such enquiries made at local libraries, with special reference to the *Inquirer*, might well prove fruitful.

While the Department has no spectacular story to tell, it can report steady growth at some points, a strengthening of the cause at many others, and its own willingness to serve the Churches. Our goal is 30,000 Unitarians by 1962. Let every Church write in to tell how many new members have joined the membership since May, 1958—by way of an interim report. Let us know what you are doing, and what you want to do, and how we can help.

International Service

TAUNTON, Mary Street Chapel.—On Sunday, 27th November, an International Service was held in the Chapel. This service, arranged by the Taunton Branch of the International Friendship League, was conducted by the minister, the Rev. William Miller, who also gave the address. There was a large congregation and several nationalities and religious faiths, including Jews and Roman Catholics, were represented. The readings included the 35th Chapter of Isaiah, read by Mr. Werner Schmidt, and the Buddhist Benediction. An offertory was taken for the Lisbon Refugee Fund.

TRY THIS—FROM GUILDFORD

By L. Rampton

A FEW MONTHS AGO one of our smaller causes in the South of England, Guildford, decided to hold a series of evening services in an endeavour to attract and hold new members, and to give those people who found morning attendance difficult a chance to go to Church at least once a month. This was one more move in a series of endeavours to try to rebuild a sadly depleted congregation.

The Church, like a number of others, had found itself trapped in a vicious circle, namely, few people in the congregation producing but weak hymn singing despite earnest striving. This in turn being a poor "advertisement" to the passer-by brought little or no enquiries from casual attenders. Hence no new members were forthcoming, and the congregation remained few in numbers. The Church tried a canvassing and advertising campaign with helpers coming down from London each evening of the week to go out and knock on doors. Fifteen hundred houses were visited in five evenings, but this attempt to break the circle at its first point was little more than a glorious failure.

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With the decision to hold evening services came yet another setback, but this was to prove a blessing in disguise. Because of pressure of domestic duties our organist was unable to play for us in the evenings. We turned to the idea of hymns played on a solo piano and recorded on conventional 78 r.p.m. discs. These proved impracticable as only single verses were recorded and the needle arm had to be moved at the end of each verse. Next we tried 45 r.p.m. discs of choirs with various kinds of accompaniment, but these were found unsuitable because of the musical arrangements used and because of the orthodox trinitarian words. In desperation we borrowed a tape recorder and appealed to one of our northern Churches for help in providing us with "taped" hymns. The response was immediate. Without ado these good friends held a special hymn service at which eight of our best Unitarian hymns were recorded.

Their organ, choir and congregation, are, to us at any rate, magnificent and we could not wait to try out our plan. At last the second Sunday in the month came round and with the evening the time for the service. The visiting Preacher had been forewarned and asked to choose four of the hymns. As "Operator" of the recorder I confess that my hands shook a little when the first hymn was announced. I need not have worried. The Church to us "regulars" was nothing short of transformed. One could almost imagine the pews packed to capacity instead of containing merely a few gathered together in his name. Indeed one had only to shut one's eyes and the illusion became reality.

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But the practical augmentation which was all that we had been concerned with was not the greatest event of that evening. We, who for so long had been isolated as a tiny group, suddenly became in truth members of that greater fellowship of the spirit. We had previously accepted intellectually that we were members of this larger circle, but now we truly felt with our whole being that we belonged. If we do not get one single new member as a result of this experiment it will still have been eminently worth while for the spiritual uplift it has brought to a few.

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Having "sounded" outside the door to hear what it sounded like on the outside I do not believe we can fail to attract the passer-by. Curiosity alone will bring them in. After years of hearing nothing, and seeing but half a dozen of us the "locals" will wonder how it is we have suddenly managed to fill the Church with sound. They will come in and see, and some will be won to the cause. We are breaking that vicious circle at its second point because we have received a spiritual transfusion from our brethren in the north which has put new life into us.

It now occurs to us here in Guildford, and up at Horwich, that others of our Churches might desire to follow our lead. There are towns in this country which are "twinned" with towns on the Continent for mutual, cultural and other benefits. It is a fact that Unitarianism is relatively strong in the north, and comparatively weak in the south. Would it not be of mutual benefit for "twinning" to take place between Churches in the north, and those in the south, especially for the purpose I have described? The advantages are by no means all on one side. Not only does the "receptor" Church gain spiritual and material augmentation but the "donor" congregation has the satisfaction of knowing they are helping their brethren. They too can experience that wonderful feeling of being in a wider fellowship when making the recordings.

We do urge that our stronger causes should volunteer their help and that our smaller Churches should not hesitate to ask for and accept that help. By so doing they will greatly strengthen the common cause of liberal religion throughout the country.

SEVEN TIMES MAYOR OF BATH

By R. D. Wendall

SOME 125 years ago, on November 10th, Jerom Murch completed his "History of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West of England".

Murch, who was to live on till 1895 and to be a friend of Robert Hibbert, the founder of the Hibbert Trust, was then a young man. He had served two of his thirteen years as minister of Trim Street Chapel, Bath. No one was to know then that he was to be seven times Mayor of Bath.

His book was a simple record of West of England Unitarianism as it then was. Murch came from a family long associated with the Bridge Meeting House at Honiton. He knew therefore his background thoroughly. What makes depressing the reading of this book is that so many of the causes he refers to have closed their doors. In Gloucestershire there is no longer a Unitarian Chapel at Marshfield. In Wiltshire three of the four chapels he mentions are closed—Calne, Bradford and Warminster. In Somerset the congregation at Ashwick is now long forgotten. So too is the old Dorchester congregation. In Devonshire the casualties since 1835 include Honiton, Colyton, Lympstone and Guilford, Topsham and Devonport. Today, too, there are no congregations in Cornwall.

In Murch's time there were chapels at Falmouth and Flushing. In the meantime what new congregations have arisen? There appear to be two—at Torquay and Newton Abbot.

It must be remembered too that where Murch refers to congregations running into several hundreds those congregations today are often very small.

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Indirectly he refers to the reasons for the failure of Unitarianism to hold its own in the very Conservative West of England. There is the argument that Unitarians are not respectable, where the ministers tend to be politically to the left. In referring to the congregation at Devonport at the time of the French Revolution he mentions: "It was reported and currently believed that Commissioner Fanshawe of the Dockyard had intimated that he should consider all persons who attended the new chapel as disloyal subjects. This intimation produced the desired effect; most of those who were connected with Government departments withdrew; and professional gentlemen and tradesmen quickly followed the example". This has inevitably happened more than once since.

Murch also indicates that too often these Chapels depended on wealthy families. The Lee family apparently at one time supported the old Chapel at Guildford which in its heyday often had 12 or 13 carriages at the yard gate. He notes "Their loss must have been severely felt". When the rich left others left as well and the chapel remained with a hard core often of those families descended from the original founders.

Then, too, there have been the inevitable misfits amongst the ministers. Of one ministry at a country chapel long closed Murch comments: "At first the numbers were lessened by deaths and removals but afterwards by circumstances which might have been prevented. Every minister cannot commend popularity . . . but every minister can let his conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ".

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Basically of course he gives the main cause of the decline of many congregations—that originally they had been the only ones in the district and that they had suffered some internal divisions due to the doctrinal changes in the eighteenth century, when English Presbyterianism had become Unitarian. At Frenchay for example he notes that "Until within a comparatively recent period there was no other place of worship in the neighbourhood".

In the eighteenth century too as the ministers became better educated there was less fiery teaching and this too had its effects.

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In writing about the Poole congregation Murch says that the majority of these more cultured ministers "though possessed of good talents and though eminently useful by their private examples and literary labours did not accommodate themselves to the wants and wishes of the age. They persisted in composing and reading sermons which could only be admired by the select few; and hence the numerical declensions which mark the history of the Presbyterians at the close of the last century".

Murch himself clearly saw the need for the congregations to consist of a good cross section of society and emphasised that the great success of the Unitarian congregation at Trowbridge was because "the majority of its members are in the humblest walks of life, yet find the simple truths of Unitarianism amply sufficient."

He declares "One thing is certain; if I had hoped to convey a favourable idea of the energy of our body or of its numerical strength, I must soon have laid my pen in despair".

He considered that there was a need for Unitarians to know their history and to see how much they had declined and to know what "means which have been employed, where a revival has been produced".

Correspondence

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer" 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

National Council of Social Service

Sir: Having become a subscriber to the Charities Aid Fund of the National Council of Social Service, it occurs to me that the service this fund offers to people might be of interest to others.

Briefly, the Fund accepts deeds of covenant from individuals, companies, and partnerships and distributes the money to such charities as the subscriber indicates. One advantage the Fund has is that the Revenue pays out the tax almost as soon as the subscriber pays the annual instalment.

The big advantage the Fund offers is that the amounts paid to charities can be varied from year to year, either in the amount or in the recipient. A special appeal such as a flood relief fund or for a church organ can be supported. If the subscriber moves from one district to another, a subscription for his local church can be changed to the new church.

Churches which may be thinking of setting up a scheme of planned giving might think of enquiring about the facilities available to them through the Fund.

London, S.E.9. Yours, W. J. Shearing.

The Aberdeen Unitarian Church

Sir: May I, as a former minister there, be permitted to add a few notes to the interesting account of the Aberdeen Unitarian Church which recently appeared in your pages. There is evidence of Unitarianism in Aberdeen before George Taylor wrote to Glasgow in 1830 asking for a Unitarian preacher to be sent to the city. The great walking Unitarian missionary preacher, Richard Wright, in fact paid two successful visits between 1809 and 1817, and I think it highly probable that the Unitarianism of George Taylor and his friends may have stemmed from those visits.

George Taylor was a Chartist, and from the start the Aberdeen Unitarian group had a strongly working-class flavour. But as a manufacturer Taylor was himself well enough off to bequeath a charity for Aberdeen citizens.

The Rev. George Harris, then of Glasgow, who activated not several, but many, Unitarian stations in Scotland, can indeed be regarded as the spiritual father of the Aberdeen Unitarian cause. It is to be hoped therefore that his portrait, which used to hang on the vestry wall, will be carefully preserved.

The congregation has always been progressive in its theology. It is therefore interesting to note that in Commager's "Theodore Parker" we are told that a Peter Robertson of Aberdeen wrote to Parker telling of Parker's influence in Aberdeen, and that he had read Parker's "Discourse of Religion" (1842).

Finally may I express the hope that every effort will be made to discover and preserve the old minute books and records of this northern outpost of Unitarianism. They were obviously used by the Rev. Ceiron Jones when he wrote the "Centenary Souvenir of Unitarianism in Aberdeen" (1933). But they seem to have disappeared since then.

Swansea. Yours, L. Baker Short.

Reasons for Pride

Sir: When I read Barbara Wootton's "I am ashamed of my country . . ." the other week, it struck discordantly, and now I realise that, having lived for 23 years as a wife and mother outside the aegis of the Commonwealth, I AM PROUD OF MY COUNTRY because:—

Murder is regarded as a serious crime, and not merely an unpleasant incident.

For good or ill the life of a murderer is considered worthy of the personal attention of one of the highest officers of state.

The pros and cons of capital punishment are debated on serious grounds; capital punishment is not discarded merely because the carriage of justice is insecure. We trust our judges.

Our civilisation is such that the police are normally unarmed.

When irregularities occur in the public service they are brought to light and investigated.

Public servants are normally helpful and courteous.

Above all, honesty is the rule and not the exception.

You see sir, that from a wider angle, I AM PROUD OF MY COUNTRY.

Winscombe, Somerset. Yours, Millicent Blake.

International Weekend

Sir: On April the 28th next year Great Hucklow will see the gathering of young people of various nations. They will meet for the weekend on a social basis to express ideas on Nationalism and Internationalism. Enquiries and donations should be sent to Douglas H. Copley at the address below.

61 Bolton Drive, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire. Yours, Douglas H. Copley. *International Weekend Secretary.*

News Review

Decorating at Stalybridge

Yet two more lights went out for the last time! The committee met. Since then the building has been completely re-wired and modern lighting equipment installed with extra facilities included, like dimmers, points for spot and flood-lighting, and so on. The whole scheme has been a gift from the Warden and his lady, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Thompson, and from Mrs. P. Thompson. It has transformed the church.

Again, the committee met. Redecorating became essential. As the Epistle to the Ephesians says, "... for the light makes all things visible". Courage was taken into Unitarian hands and a scheme revolutionary in concept knits together contemporary ideas of interior decoration and the structure of the church evolved from its history. The result is outstanding. The craftsmanship is that of a Unitarian, Mr. Harry Schofield, Rishworth, without whose co-operation the scheme might have failed. The chancel, a pattern of blue, deep-gold, pomegranate, very light grey wood, with floor contemporary carpet all paintings fitted in with a light Communion Table, is an outstanding feature.

The committee and congregation had looked for ahead. Before any work started, money was ready for the bill. Careful planning on

(continued on page 826)

THE CALENDAR OF THE CHURCHES

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 1961

ABERDEEN, Unitarian Church, Skene Street, 11 and 6, Supply

ABERYSTWYTH, New Street Meeting House, 11, Rev. J. H. Cuban Davis

AINSWORTH, Unitarian Church, Edenfield Road, 11.15 and 3, Rev. B. Gill

ALTRINCHAM, Dunham Road Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. P. B. Godfrey

ASTLEY, Unitarian Chapel, Manchester Road, 6.30, Supply

BATH, Trim Street Chapel, Unitarian, 6.30, Rev. Sidney Spencer

BELFAST, All Souls, Elmwood Avenue, 11.30 and 7, Dr. A. L. Agnew

BELFAST, First Church, Rosemary Street, 11.30 and 7, Dr. H. J. McLachlan

BIDDELL GREEN (nr. Sevenoaks), Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. Magnus Ratter

BILLERICAY, Free Church, High Street, 11, Mr. G. E. Prentice

BIRKENHEAD, Unitarian Church, Clive Road, 6.30 (January 8), Rev. Maurice Johnson

BIRMINGHAM, Church of Messiah, Broad Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Gordon Stuart

BIRMINGHAM, Worcester Road, Church and Hurst Street Mission, Small Heath, 6, Mr. A. Benton

BLACKPOOL, North Shore, Dickson Road, 10.45 and 6.30, Mr. F. A. West

BLACKPOOL, South Shore, Lytham Road, 11 and 6.30, Mr. Frank Lowe

BOLTON, Bank Street, 2.30, Sunday School, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. E. Sidwell Pryce

BOLTON, Unity Church, Deane Road, 10.30, Rev. A. J. Long

BOLTON, Wednesbury, 3 and Hollowell Road, 6.30, Rev. Kenneth Wright

BOSTON (Lincs.), Unitarian Chapel, Spain Lane, 6.30, Rev. Henry Hall

BOURNEMOUTH, Unitarian Church, West Hill Road, 11, Rev. S. P. Whitbrook

BRADFORD, Broadway Avenue, 3.15, Supply

BRADFORD, Town Hall Square, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Frank A. Billcock

BRIDGWATER, Christ Church, Dampier Street, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. Wm. Millar

BRIGHOUSE, Unitarian Chapel, 11, Rev. G. Randell Jones

BRIGHTON, Christ Church, Unitarian, New Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. John Rowland

BRISTOL, Lewin's Mead Meeting, 6.30, Rev. A. H. Bartlett

BRISTOL, Oakfield Road, 11, Rev. A. H. Bartlett, 6.30, Mr. R. L. Nicholson

BURY, Bank Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. F. M. Byers

CAMBRIDGE, Memorial Church, Emmanuel Road, 11 and 6, Rev. H. Stewart Carter

CARDIFF, The West Grove Unitarian Church, 6.30, Rev. T. J. Jones

CHATHAM, The Church of the Great Companions, Hammond Hill, 3, Mrs. Inge Hyde

CHELTENHAM, Bayshill Unitarian Church, Royal Well, 11, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. James M. Quinn

CHESTER, Matthew Henry's Chapel, Trinity Street, 11, Supply, 6.30, Rev. E. H. Shaw

CHESTERFIELD, Elder Yard Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. A. W. Vallance

CHESTERTON CHAPEL, Atherton, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Kenneth Twiss

COVENTRY, Great Meeting House, Ratcliffe Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. F. H. Mares

CREWE, Free Christian Church, Beech Street, 6.30, Supply

CRICKLEWOOD, Unitarian Church, Bloomfield Street, 11 and 6.30, Mrs. M. R. Dicken

CROYDON, Free Christian Church, Friends Road, 11, Children's Service, 6.30, Rev. E. G. Lee

DARWEN, Willow Street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Supply

DERBY, Prior Gate Unitarian Chapel, 6.30, Supply

DEVIZES, Old Meeting House, 10.45, Mr. C. S. Dewey

DONCASTER, Free Church, Hall Gate, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Alec L. Fidgeon

DUKINFIELD, Astley Street, Unitarian Church, 11, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. Philip C. Whitehead

DUBLIN, Stephen's Green, West, 11.30 and 7.30, Rev. E. Savell Hicks

DUDLEY, Old Meeting House, Wolverhampton Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Norman Kirkham

DUNFERMLINE, Old Chapel, Chapel Hill, 10.45 and 6.30, Supply

DUNMOW, Unitarian Church, 93, Commission Road, 11, Rev. G. D. Faith

EDINBURGH, St. Mark's Church, Castle Terrace, 11 and 7 (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays), Rev. Bruce Fyfe-Jamieson

EXETER, George's Chapel, South Street, 6.30, Rev. Dr. F. D. Mottu-Keitel

GEE CROSS, Hyde Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. Hanby Smith

GLASGOW, St. Vincent Street, Unitarian Church, 11, Supply

GLOSSOP, Pimpilow Street, 2, Sunday School, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. W. H. Crowell

GOSPORT, Bethesda Street, 3, Rev. James W. Quinn

GOSWARTHS, Meadows Chapel (Farnworth), 6.30, Rev. G. Morel Bowes

GUILDFORD, Ward Street Church, 11, Mr. Peter Sidney

HALL CROFTS, Hyde Bottom, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. G. J. Price

HALIFAX, Northgate End, 10.45, Rev. Percy Walker

HALSTEAD, Free Christian Church, South Terrace, 11, Rev. Dendrick Helton, 6.30, Mrs. Morton Helton

HASLEMERE, Grove Meeting, Bolton Lane, 11 and 6, Rev. F. A. Davies

HASLINGDEN, Worsthorne Road, 11, Rev. J. Maurice Hall

HASTINGS, Pilgrim's Place, 6, Rev. Percy Walker

HEALD, Unitarian Church, Park Street, 11, Rev. Ernest Pugh

HEYWOOD, Market Place, Unitarian Chapel, 6.30, Supply

HIGHGATE, New Meeting House, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Edgar W. Hill

HIGHGATE, South Street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Albert Smith

LANCASTER, St. Nicholas Street Church, 6.30, Supply

LEEDS, Mill Hill Chapel, City Square, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. R. L. Galland

LEEDS, Newlay Church, 11, Junior Church, 6.30, Mr. C. V. Watson

LEICESTER, The Great Meeting, East Bond Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. D. Dowding

LEWES, Westgate Chapel, 11, Rev. Denis Tovey

LINCOLN, High Street, Unitarian Chapel, 6.30, Rev. H. W. Kenworthy

LIVERPOOL, Arnolds Chapel of Ease, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Dr. P. N. Evans

LIVERPOOL, Brooks Free Church, 11, Rev. C. A. Piper

LIVERPOOL, Domestic Mission, Mill Street, 6.30, Rev. J. Kyle Mumford

LIVERPOOL, Gateacre Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. S. R. Bevan

LIVERPOOL, Hardman Road, Everton, 3, Sunday School, 6.30, Rev. C. A. Piper

LIVERPOOL, Hope Street, 6.30

LIVERPOOL, Ullet Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. B. Storey

LONDON, Bell Street, Edgware Road, 6, Rev. Walter W. Lewis

LONDON, Bloomsbury, Hunter and Stamford Street Chapel, 6.30, Mr. John Wilson

LONDON, Clifton, Ellis Road, 11, Rev. F. G. Lee

LONDON, Dulwich Grove, Upper Lane, 11, Rev. Eustace Tovey

LONDON, Golders Green, Hoop Lane, 11, West W. K. Gordon, 6.30, Mr. J. Rawson

LONDON, Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Clarence Place, 11 (Family Service), Rev. R. F. Grimwood

LONDON, Hampstead, Rosslyn Hill, 11, Rev. Howard P. Main

LONDON, Highgate Hill, Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. John Kelly

LONDON, Islington, High Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. T. F. Preston

LONDON, Islington, Upper Street, 6.30, Rev. A. V. Fox

LONDON, Kensington Unitarian Church, Allen Street, 11, Rev. A. V. Fox

LONDON, Lewisham Unitarian Church, Queen Road, 11, Rev. A. V. Fox

LONDON, Mansfield Street Church, Richard Green, 6.30, Rev. Gwynne Short

LONDON, Richmond Free Church, Heyward Road, 11, Rev. Wilfred M. Lewis

LONDON, Strand, Essex Church, Essex Hall (opposite Law Courts), 6.30, Dr. Sidney Gamble

LONDON, Stamford, West Ham Lane, Unitarian Church, 11.30, Children's Church, 6.30, Rev. R. H. Shelton

LONDON, Wandsworth Unitarian Church, East Hill, 11, Rev. Antonio Pocock (also 6.30, 1st Sunday in the month)

LONDON, Welsh Unitarian Church at Highgate Hill Unitarian Church, 1st and 3rd Sundays, 6, Rev. T. L. Jones

LONDON, Wood Green, Unity Church, Newsham Road, 6.30, Rev. Magnus Ratter

LYTHAM ST ANNES (Ansdell), Channing Road, 11, Supply

MACCLESFIELD, King Edward Street, 10.45 and 6.30, Mr. Peter Jones

MAIDSTONE, Unitarian Church, Market Buildings, 6.30, Rev. Dendrick Helton

MANCHESTER, Blackley, Unitarian Chapel, Chapel Lane, 6.30, Supply

MANCHESTER, Cross Street Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. C. H. Bartlett

MANCHESTER, Failsworth, Dob Lane Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Donald Mills

MANCHESTER, Gorton, Brookfield Church, Hyde Road, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Maurice Burnett

MANCHESTER, Monton Church, Taylor, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. W. Hill Warring

MANCHESTER, Pendleton Unitarian, Cross Lane, 6.30, Supply

MANCHESTER, Platt Chapel, Rusholme, 6.30, Student

MANCHESTER, Renshaw Street, Mission, 6.30, Supply

MANCHESTER, Stand Chapel, Whitefield (January 8) 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Sydney H. Knight

MANCHESTER, Willbraham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, 11, Supply

MANCHESTER, Wythenshawe, Unitarian Church, Brownley Road, Benchill, 6.30, Rev. John Gill

MANSFIELD, Old Meeting House, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Kenneth Sherratt

MARPLE, Unitarian Hall, 31, Stockport Road, 11 each Sunday

MEXBOROUGH, Free Christian Church, 6.30, Rev. Lawrence Hallworth

MIDDLETON, Old Road Chapel, 3.15, Supply

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, The Church of the Divine Unity, Ellison Place, 11 and 6.30, Rev. John Stobie

NEWCHURCH (Rossendale), Bethlehem Unitarian Church, 10.30 and 6, Rev. John Mather

NORTHAMPTON, Kettering Road Church, 6.30, Supply

NORWICH, Octagon Chapel, Colegate, 11, Rev. J. A. Kennedy

NOTTINGHAM, High Pavement Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. C. Gordon Bolam

OLDBURY, Unitarian Church, Birmingham Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Harold A. Gore

OLDHAM, Lord Street Chapel, 10.45 and 6.30, Supply

OXFORD, Manchester College Chapel, 11.30, Rev. H. L. Short

PADIHAM, Nazareth Unitarian Church, Knight Hill, 2.30, Rev. G. W. Pitts

PARK LANE CHAPEL, nr. Wigan, 11 and 6.30, Rev. Gordon L. Clarke

PLYMOUTH, Unitarian Church, Notte Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. R. Blackburn

POOLE, Unitarian Church, Hill Street, 11.15 a.m., Rev. J. W. Dimmer

PORTSMOUTH, John Pound's Memorial Church, High Street, 11, Junior Church, 6.30, Rev. John R. Sturgess

PRESTON, Unitarian Chapel, Church Street, 6.30, Supply

RINGSTON, Hants, The Meeting House, 11, Rev. Francis Tebby

RIPPONDEN CHAPEL, nr. Rochdale, Lancs., 3, Rev. R. I. Pritchard

ROCHDALE, Blackwater Street, 10.30 and 6, Rev. F. W. Bass

ROTHERHAM, Church of our Father, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. Eric Phillips

SALE, Atkinson Road, 11, Rev. John Gill

SCARBOROUGH, Unitarian Church, Westborough, 6.30, Rev. G. W. Parkinson

SHEFFIELD, Attercliffe, 6.30, Supply

SHEFFIELD, Fulwood Old Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. P. Bolton Morris

SHEFFIELD, Unity Church, Crookesmoor Road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. D. Davies

SHEFFIELD, Upper Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. G. Stanley Watson

SHREWSBURY, High Street, Unitarian, 6.30, Supply

SOMERTON, Old Meeting, Unitarian, High Street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. H. Worthington

SOUTHAMPTON, Church of the Saviour, London Road, 11, Rev. W. R. Cummings

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, Eversley Road, 6.30, Supply

SOUTHPORT, Portland Street Church, 11 and 6.30, Mr. J. C. Tetlow

SOUTHPORT, Unitarian Church, St. Peter's Gate, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. R. G. Kendall

ST. HELENS, Corporation Street, 6.30, Supply

STOCKTON-ON-TEES, Wellington Street, 6.30, Rev. A. D. Wellman (also 11, Second Sunday in the month)

STOCKPORT, Presbyterian Unitarian Chapel, 11, Rev. C. Smethurst

SWANSEA, Pleasant Free Christian Meeting House, 11, Supply

SWANSEA, Unitarian Church, High Street, 6.30, Rev. L. Bolton Savage (also 11, First Sunday in the month)

SWINTON, Swinton Hall Road, 6.30, Lay Preacher

TAUNTON, Mary St. Chapel, 11, Rev. Wm. Millar

TEWKESBURY, Old Meeting House, Ancford Road, 6.30, Rev. G. Kinsey

TORRINGTON, Unitarian Church, 10.45 and 6, Supply

TORQUAY, Unity Church off The Terrace, 11, Rev. Cranston Fawcus

TOTTINGTON, Congre Unitarian Church, 11, Rev. S. Spencer

WALLASEY, Memorial Church, Manor Road, 11, Supply, 6.30, Rev. E. H. Shaw

WARMSLEY, Unitarian Free Church, Stafford Street, 11, Rev. R. J. Wellbourne, 2.30, Sunday School

WARRINGTON, Cairo Street, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. Eric Wild

WARWICK, Unitarian Chapel, High Street, 6, Rev. H. Mortimer

WATFORD, Friends House, Church Road (by permission), 7.30, Rev. Dendrick Rochelle

WEST BROMWICH, Lodge Road, 11, Children's Church, 6.30, Rev. R. J. Wellbourne

WEST EALING, Brookfield Gardens, 11, Rev. Maurice Jamieson (also 6.30, First Sunday in the month)

WESTON, Flowergate, 2.30, Mr. E. E. Stoneham

WEYMOUTH, Hope Row, 11.45, Dr. E. A. Whitmee, Syed, 3, Rev. F. Gotton

WHITBY, St. Stevengate Chapel, 6.30, Mr. C. H. Smith

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AUSTRALIA

ADELAIDE, Unitarian Christian Church, Wakefield St., 11 and 7, Rev. Gavin Grimm

MELBOURNE, Unitarian Church, Cathedral Place, C.2.; Unitarian Hall (Elsternwick), 4.15, Services: 4 p.m. second Sunday in each month, Evening 7 p.m. Rev. V. Jones

PERTH, Western Australia, Unitarian Free Christian Fellowship, Rev. R. H. Fitchett-Jones, 132, Blake Street, Southborough, West Australia

SYDNEY, Community Church, Austin Road, Seaford (Stn.), 9.5, weekly at 10 a.m. Public Worship, fortnightly, 2.30 p.m., Minister: Rev. F. M. Wood

SYDNEY, New South Wales, Unitarian Church, 157, Pitt Street (off College St.) 7.15, Rev. D. W. Simpson, Home Telephone FJ 8.9222

UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIA, 1 Grey Alley, Melbourne, C.1. Minister Rev. T. M. Wooton. Meetings as advertised.

CANADA

MONTREAL, Church of the Messiah, Sherbrooke Street West and Simpson Street, 11, Rev. Lawrence Mercer

TORONTO, First Unitarian Church, 175 St. Clair Avenue West, 11, Rev. John H. Wilson

VANCOUVER, B.C., Unitarian Church of Vancouver, 1550 Tenth Avenue West, 9.30 and 11, Rev. A. P. Hewett

NEW ZEALAND

AUCKLAND, Unitarian Church, Parnell's Road, 11 and 7, Mr. W. J. White

WELLINGTON, Service suspended—Enquiries Miss Morris, Tel. 46-272

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CAPE TOWN, Hope Street, 11, Sunday School, 7, Service, Supply

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(Continued from page 822)

the financial side; adventurous scheming on the decorative side; the generous gift from the "Thompson family", who insisted that the committee was left free to plan their own lighting design, has combined to create a new look at Stalybridge.

Women's League

The North-East Lancs Women's League held their quarterly meeting at the Rawtenstall Church. Mrs. Mather of Newchurch was the speaker at the service in the afternoon. At the business meeting after tea, Mrs. Thompson of Rawtenstall, and Mrs. Mather of Newchurch, reported on the Rally held at Bolton in October. Mrs. Widdup of Todmorden moved a vote of thanks to all who had contributed to making an enjoyable and interesting day. Mrs. Mather of Newchurch presided.

Wallace Browning Tavener

Wallace Tavener died suddenly on the morning of Wednesday, 7th December. His funeral service, on the following Saturday, was conducted, in the presence of a few friends at the manse, and later before a large congregation at the crematorium, by the Rev. Bruce Findlow, who spoke with characteristic sincerity, and with moving sympathy, of the life and work of the man who, for thirty years, was his predecessor in the ministry of St. Mark's, Edinburgh. When he died he had been minister of our Aberdeen Church for two-and-a-half years.

When, some weeks ago, I wrote Wallace Tavener's "Profile" for the *Inquirer*, he mentioned me, in his end modesty, those vapid many of the things which I should have said about him then; and I failed to convey how warmly and affectionately we regarded him. Today, I'd like to think that what I say is written on behalf of that large company of men and women who loved him.

*

I cannot yet write objectively about him, for I knew him well for thirty years, and latterly as my close friend and companion. In the early days, whenever I could be in Edinburgh on a Sunday, I listened to his gospel addresses with an admiration which amounted to reverence. He was always clear and succinct; and he edited every address with wit and humour. It was only in the past two years that I realised just how much care and preparation he put into his sermons. His church sermons bore the stamp of publication. There were no loose ends, no licence to distract his congregation from worship. "His tongue dealt sermons." I never heard him speak without feeling richer informed and, however temporarily, even a better person. His sense of humour gave happiness, delight and serenity.

He was a man of many talents. His success as an artist gave him much pleasure, and he had inherited his father's fabulous use of colour; he could frame and glaze his pictures expertly. He read widely, and with a retentive memory. He was both student and scholar, but he was completely in touch with everyday life. He was a Socialist, and one of his last public addresses, outside church, was to the Aberdeen Fabian Society. A week or two before his death he chaired a large public meeting, organised by the local Humanist Group, when Margaret Knight met the Chaplain to the University in strenuous debate.

Wallace Tavener was himself a Humanist in the finest sense of that much misused word. Those who have not read his book on the subject (which, by the time of his passing, he had re-written and brought up to date), should do so. In it there is evident his sincere and profound sense of the divine presence in all life; and his memorable words on world-compassion bear the stamp of all great religious thought.

I shall always remember his prayers, of which he had composed well over a hundred, and which deserve publication. They had a unique quality of brevity and sincerity; in some ways they were more deeply moving because they were impromptu, but they accurately reflected their "mystical experience" which he could so convincingly impart to his hearers.

Our thoughts must be with his wife in her great sorrow. By his passing we have lost an outstanding Unitarian minister. He leaves behind the great company of those whom he inspired to espouse our Unitarian cause, and who will continue to bear that distinctive witness which he imparted to them.

George C. Mavrogordato

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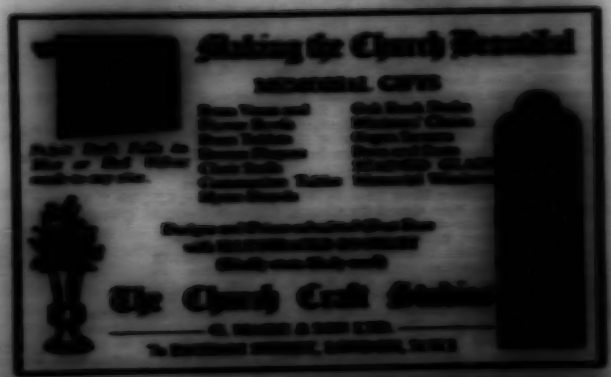
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